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UHLAND'S EARLIEST BALLAD AND ITS SOURCE.

IT is well known that Uhland regarded his earlier poetic attempts with a certain respect, and that he preserved them in carefully written copies. Among a number of note-books left at the time of his death are two containing poems which extend from 1800 to 1804, and of which only a part have ever been published. The second of these note-books, bearing the significant motto from Propertius:

Me juvat in prima coluisse Heliconæ juventa
Musarumque choris implicuisse manus,

contains on p. 12 his first ballad, in eleven stanzas, dated Dec. 16, 1802.

Some years ago this note-book was lent to Professor Eugen Nägele of the Royal Gymnasium in Tübingen for a very brief inspection, and he transcribed and published two stanzas of the ballad in his *Beiträge zu Uhland (Nachrichten über das Königliche Gymnasium zu Tübingen, 1893, p. 32).*

Subsequently he was unable to gain further access to this material, which was closely guarded by Uhland's heirs.

In April, 1897, the entire collection of Uhland's literary remains and correspondence was purchased from Dr. Meyer of Stuttgart by the Swabian Schiller Society, which is now in possession of the same.

The ballad bears the title: 'Das Lied vom armen Vater. Ein Harfnerlied aus einem unvollendeten Gedichte.' It begins

Es steht ein Schloß in einem Wald,
Gar einsam und entlegen,
Darinnen wol ein Räuber haust'
Ein fürchterlicher Degen.

The robber has captured a girl, whom he holds as prisoner. Her father comes before the castle, leaning upon his staff:

‘Gieb, Räuber, mir mein Töchterlein,
Es ist mein Trost im Leben,
Viel Silber und viel rothes Gold
Will ich dafür dir geben !’

Further on in the poem he says that the daughter is ‘seines Alters Freude.’ He meets a knight, and begs him to deliver the girl, but without success, and he then withdraws in sadness to ‘eine enge Zelle.’

Admitting that the literary merits of this production of a youth of less than sixteen years (apart from the sure metrical touch) are extremely scanty, it is still of great importance in showing certain steps in his poetic development. We have here, three years before the appearance of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a ballad which shows throughout characteristic features of the popular poetry, which, at a later period, was to have so large a share in freshening and strengthening Uhland's verse. We see him breaking away for the first time from the moralizing ‘school poetry’ upon which he had been trying his youthful hand; he strikes out, in a crude enough fashion, to be sure, into the field in which he was to gain his surest fame as a poet. In a general way, it was probably the influence of Bürger, which was very potent with him at just this time, which led him to attempt such an adaptation of a popular ballad. As has been pointed out by Nägele (p. 32), the poem furnishes important elements for the later ballad *Der blinde König* (1804) which were not supplied by Saxo Grammaticus: the robber, the captured daughter who had been the delight of her aged father, her rescue as the object of the champion's endeavors. The title, ‘ein Harfnerlied,’ suggests a motive which Uhland later introduced in *Des Sängers Fluch* (1814), in which poem I trace the direct influence of a ballad, *Das Lied von dem Graffen von Rom*, which was first published in Adelung's *Magazin für die deutsche Sprache*, 1784, 3, pp.

114 ff. It seems likely that Uhland may have known this publication, which contained various interesting *Volkslieder*, before writing the ballad under consideration. One wonders what the plan of the 'incomplete poem,' in which this 'harper's song' appears as an episode, was to be,—perhaps an extended romantic epic?

The source of *Das Lied vom armen Vater* has not hitherto been identified. It lies in the poem *Das Schloss in Oesterreich*, contained in the first volume of the *Deutsches Museum* (1776, pp. 399–402):

Es liegt ein Schlosz in Oesterreich,
Das ist gantz wol erbawet,
Von Silber vnd von rothem Gold,
Mit Marmorsteinen vermawert.

Darinnen ligt ein junger Knab
Auff seinen Halsz gefangen,
Wol viertzig Klaffter tieff vnter der Erden,
Bey Nattern und bey Schlangen.

Sein Vater kam von Rosenberg
Wol vor den Thurm gegangen.
Ach Sohne, lieber Sohne mein,
Wie hart ligst du gefangen!

Ach Vater, liebster Vater mein,
Gar hart lieg ich gefangen,
Wol viertzig Klaffter tieff vnter der Erden,
Bey Nattern vnd bey Schlangen.

Sein Vater zu dem Herren gieng:
Gebt mir losz den Gefangen,
Drey hundert Gùlden will ich euch geben
Wol für desz Knaben sein Leben.

Drey hundert Gùlden die helfen da nicht,
Der Knabe musz sterben,
Er trägt von Golde ein Ketten am Halsz,
Die bringet jhn vmb sein Leben.

Trägt er von Gold ein Ketten am Halsz,
Die hat er nicht gestolen,
Es hat sie jhm ein zartes Jungfräwlein verehrt,
Darzu hat sie jhn erzogen.

Man bracht den Knaben wol aus dem Thurm,
Vnd gab jhm das Sacramente ;
Hilff, reicher Christ vom Himmel hoch !
Es geht mir an mein Ende.

Man bracht den Knaben zum Gericht hinaus,
Die Leiter muste er steigen.
Ach Meister, lieber Meister mein,
Lasz mir doch eine kleine Weile.

Eine kleine Weile die lasz ich dir nicht,
Du möchtest mir sonst entinnen ;
Langt mir ein seiden Tüchlein her,
Dasz ich jhm seine Augen verbinde.

Ach meine Augen verbinde mir nicht,
Ich musz die Welt anschawen ;
Ich sehe sie heut vnd nimmermehr
Mit meinen schwartzbraun Augen.

Sein Vater beym Gerichte stundt,
Sein Hertz wolt jhm zerbrechen :
Ach Sohne, lieber Sohne mein,
Deinen Todt wil ich rächen.

Ach Vater, liebster Vater mein,
Meinen Todt solt jhr nicht rechnen,
Bringt meiner Seelen ein schwere Pein,
Vmb Vnschuldt wil ich sterben.

Es ist nicht vmb das Leben mein,
Noch vmb mein stoltzen Leib ;
Es ist vmb mein Fraw Mutter daheim,
Die weinet also sehre.

Es stundt kaum an den dritten Tag,
Ein Engel kam vom Himmel,
Man solt ihn vom Gericht nehmen ab,
Sonst würde die Stadt versinken.

Es stundt kaum an ein halbes Jahr,
Des Knaben Todt ward gerochen,
Es wurden mehr dann drey hundert Mann
Vmbs Knaben willen erstochen.

Wer ist der vns diesz Liedlein sang ?
So frey ist es gesungen.
Das haben drey Jungfräwlein gethan
Zu Wien in Oesterreiche.

The *Deutsches Museum*, conducted by Boie from 1776 to 1791, holds a most important place in the literary history of the times, and the contributions to it were of high character. Bürger, Stolberg, Lenz, Klinger, Cramer, Klopstock, Jacobi, and Voss are among its supporters, and particularly valuable were its contributions to a knowledge of the older German literature. The ballad given above occurs in the second of Eschenburg's *Beyträge zur alten deutschen Literatur*, which begin with the number for February, 1776. Other such contributions, including Müller's announcement of an edition of the *Nibelungenlied*, are of not infrequent occurrence. The magazine was undoubtedly an important feeder of Uhland's growing tastes in this direction. He found it at the home of Ferdinand Christoph Weisse, who was an advocate in Tübingen, not a professor, as stated by Uhland's widow in a very confused passage in the biography of her husband, p. 19. This passage, which professes to be a direct quotation from Uhland, referring to his early student years beginning with 1801, but whose many inaccuracies must have caused him to turn in the grave, contains the following words: 'Um diese Zeit fand ich bei einem Verwandten, dem Professor Weisse, in einem Journal, das *Heidelberger Museum* betitelt, Lieder aus dem Heldenbuche, namentlich das *Lied vom alten Hildebrand*, das tiefen Eindruck auf mich machte.' As a matter of fact the ballad *vom alten Hildebrandt* was published by Eschenburg in the same article with *Das Schloss in Oesterreich* (pp. 391-399), and for the hitherto enigmatic *Heidelberger Museum* we have to read *Deutsches Museum*. Eschenburg obtained *Das Schloss in Oesterreich* from a broadside published in 1697. It was printed later in a much revised form under the title, *Der unschuldige Tod des jungen Knaben*, in the *Wunderhorn*, I, 220. Its close relation to Uhland's ballad, both in situation and in verbal coincidences, is so obvious as to require no demonstration. The hopeless pathos of the original is fully reflected by Uhland, and in this respect the poem is the first fore-

runner of that considerable group of which he later said 'Anfangs sind wir fast zu kläglich.' Certain particular phrases in the original suggest expressions in some of Uhland's later poems, for instance, in stanzas 15 and 16, 'Es stundt kaum an,' etc., resembles

Es stund nur an eine kleine Weil'

in *Klein Roland*, and the phrase in stanza 8 :

Hilff, reicher Christ vom Himmel hoch !

is not unlike

Hilf, Himmel ! seh' ich recht ?

in the same ballad. In stanza 4,

Ach Vater, liebster Vater mein

suggests

O fasse, lieber Goldschmied mein

in *Des Goldschmieds Töchterlein*, while the expression in the fourth stanza from the end is very much like that in *König Karls Meerfahrt* :

Es ist mir um mich selbst nicht so,
Wie um die Alteclere.

Another indication of Uhland's acquaintance with this number of the *Deutsches Museum* at this time is his use in the ballad of the term *Degen*. This word occurs in the *Hildebrandslied* in the same article, p. 393, where Eschenburg has accompanied it with a foot-note, calling attention to the fact that Lessing has made use of it in *Emilia Galotti*, and recommending it to other writers.

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